

1 RESOLUTION
2 of the
3 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION BOARD
4 of the
5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
6 of the
7 MID-REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS OF NEW MEXICO
8 R-05-16 MTB

9 **CONCURRING WITH THE RECOMMENDED PREFERRED**
10 **ALTERNATIVE FOR THE ALBUQUERQUE-TO-SANTA FE**
11 **TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES**
12 **ANALYSIS STUDY**
13

14 WHEREAS, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA21)
15 require Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop a long range
16 intermodal/multimodal, financially constrained transportation plan for each metropolitan
17 area; and

18 WHEREAS, the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) is the MPO for
19 the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (AMPA); and

20 WHEREAS, the MRCOG is an association made up of and representing the local
21 governments within New Mexico State Planning and Development District 3, which
22 contains the AMPA; and

23 WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Transportation Board (MTB) of the MRCOG is
24 responsible for establishing transportation planning policy for the AMPA; and

25 WHEREAS, the MTB approved the MPO's participation with the New Mexico

26 Department of Transportation (NMDOT) in their work on the Albuquerque to Santa Fe
27 Transportation Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study in both the Fiscal Year (FY) 2005
28 and FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP) for the AMPA; and

29 WHEREAS, the Technical Advisory Committee for the Alternatives Analysis
30 Study, after a year-long, comprehensive study and review of travel needs and options,
31 has recommended a preferred alternative; and

32 NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Metropolitan Transportation Board of
33 the Board of Directors of the Mid-Region Council of Governments of New Mexico that
34 the MTB concurs with the findings and recommendations of the Albuquerque to Santa
35 Fe Transportation Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study, as set forth in ATTACHMENT
36 A.

37 PASSED, ADOPTED and APPROVED this 22nd day of September, 2005
38 by the Metropolitan Transportation Board of the Board of Directors of the Mid-Region
39 Council of Governments of New Mexico.

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E. Tim Cummins, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Board

ATTEST:


Lawrence Rael, Executive Director



- Economic Development Potential: Best economic development potential (accesses more community activity centers than any other alternative).
- Recommendation: **Retain. Meets Purpose and Need to provide a cost-effective transportation alternative to GP lanes in I-25 corridor. Provides best mobility improvements and travel time reliability of any alternative, and best community access and economic development opportunities.**

A Summary of Major Characteristics and Costs for Each Alternative is provided in Table 4-1.

4.3 Recommendation of Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative recommended by this AA is:

BNSF/COMMUNITY DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE

The BNSF/Community District Alternative is recommended by NMDOT and MRCOG as the best alternative to interface with the Phase I Belen to Santa Fe Commuter Rail Project. It would traverse the BNSF alignment between the Alvarado Station in downtown Albuquerque and the Community District southwest of Santa Fe, continue toward the Santa Fe Southern rail alignment, and proceed on the SFS between the Community District and the downtown Santa Fe Depot.

NMDOT and MRCOG recognize that there would likely be implementation of commuter rail between downtown Santa Fe and Eldorado. They also recognize there are needed safety improvements on I-25, which may include intelligent transportation system (ITS) technology, as well as a need to evaluate the potential extension of commuter rail via the SFS railway to Lamy, Pecos, and Las Vegas.

Additionally, the BNSF/Community District Alternative is recommended as the Preferred Alternative because it best meets the Purpose and Need of this project. It:

- Provides a cost-effective transportation alternative to the general-purpose lanes in the I-25 corridor
- Provides travel time reliability in the corridor
- Maintains sensitivity to Native American lands in the corridor
- Supports and enhances access to and development of Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and other activity centers in the corridor

Even with an addition of one more general-purpose lane each way on I-25, if no other transportation alternative is provided to I-25, in 20 years it will take between 108 and 152 minutes to commute one-way between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The BNSF/Community District Alternative would make a very reliable one-way trip in 83 minutes, which is much shorter than the circuitous BNSF/Lamy Alternative (102 minutes).

Because of the high expense of driving, commuters are beginning to shift to alternative modes of transportation in greater numbers. Rail transit is beneficial to daily commuters, and is much more

capable of moving more commuters along their systems than widening a highway by one expensive lane each way ever would.

Although the initial capital investment for the BNSF/Community District Alternative would be higher than the other alternatives, its annual operations and maintenance costs are comparable or lower than the rest. And, capacity to move people can be easily increased by adding train cars.

The BNSF/Community District Alternative would also provide enhanced access to existing and proposed activity centers in the corridor, with potential for transit-oriented development that would further enrich the regional economy. As APTA research has found, for every \$10 million invested in transit, there is a regional yield of \$30 million in business sales. Business development along transit lines can produce nearly half of a county's tax revenue.

Rail transit would also attract the tourist market, a very important base to the region's economy.

For these reasons, the BNSF/Community District Alternative best meets the project's Purpose and Need to improve transportation mobility in the Albuquerque to Santa Fe corridor.

4.4 Next Stage

The next stage of this study requires that the **Preferred Alternative** and the No Action Alternative (in this case, **the FTA Baseline/Regional Bus Alternative** – a TSM alternative) must be reviewed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) report. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the FTA require preparation of an EIS report whenever federal funds are used for major transportation projects. Preparation of an EIS and basic engineering will allow NMDOT and MRCOG to qualify for federal funds available through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FTA.

Albuquerque to Santa Fe Transportation Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study
Recommended Alternative: BNSF/Community District Alignment for Commuter Rail

